

Series: Theological Treatises

The Sin

A study about sin, understood as both a transgression of the Law and a situation of desperate separation from God.



Federico Salvador Wadsworth





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1. General Introduction

The search for God’s knowledge and his purpose for man constitutes the most exciting of all the adventures that the human mind can propose. The challenge of finding in the Holy Book the golden thread of the plan of salvation will reward the scholar, who will be able to understand the majesty of the effort of the One who “**who did not spare His own Son**” (**Romans 8: 32**).

The set of Bible tracts, of which you have in your hands one of the studies, has been prepared to provide the lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with the knowledge required to teach others about how to grow “**in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (**2 Peter 3: 18**) as well as for “**be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you**” (**1 Peter 3: 15**).

The author is a regular member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church since 1977, a church elder since 1979, a husband, father, and grandfather, with the joy of having his entire family in “**the faith once delivered to the saints**” (**Jude 1: 3**) and a full subscriber to the 28 official doctrines of the church.



I reiterate that these tracts have been prepared for the church member, so he must graduate the dose of knowledge that he must transmit to those who are interested in knowing Jesus, whom the prophet calls the “**Desire of all nations**” (**Haggai 2: 7**).

That's why, at the same time, we also wanted to include supplementary material to the Bible study that we hope will allow you to expand your current knowledge, as well as to be prepared to deepen on “**things the angels desire to look into**” (**1 Peter 1: 12**). Your ability to introduce these subthemes in harmony with the central concepts is key to the transfer of knowledge that you and I intend to pursue.

Since the knowledge of our God and His purposes will, by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit, always be in full swing, you will be able to find regular updates of each treatise (see the date yy.mm.dd that accompanies the name of the file). These updates, of course, will also correct some of the human flaws that may have gone unnoticed by the author. On the other hand, your well-meaning intention to help us improve these issues will always be welcome. These treatises were originally written in Spanish, my mother language, but translated to English by the author to reach more people, as the latter is considered

world-wide as the commercial and technical language.

2. Structure of the Theological Treatise

At the beginning of each treatise, we will present the general structure of the set of these using a numbered block diagram, called the General Treatise Map. This chart (shown on one of the following pages) will allow you to see where the tract you have in your hands fits concerning the other topics. To make it easier to locate, in addition to the numbering, it will be marked in a different color than the others. Collect the topics, update them, and arrange them in this sequence if you find it useful to your knowledge development.

The numbers in each block simultaneously establish the order of creation of these treatises and the logical dependence between them as well. The blocks from number 70 onwards represent, in turn, a set of special treatises. I have grouped them into 6 major themes:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------|
| a. | Comparative Religions | Series 70.nn |
| b. | Chronologies | Series 75.nn |
| c. | Gospel Harmonies | Series 80.nn |
| d. | Genealogies | Series 85.nn |
| e. | Bible biographies | Series 90.nn |

The reading of these topics will give you the frame of reference to understand the most thematic treatises. These other topics have their own structure that will be related to the one mentioned here.

After the diagram of the whole, you will find a block diagram of the study itself, called the Treatise Map, where you will be able to notice the following:

- Each block of the diagram indicates the reference verse(s) at the bottom and a short phrase that corresponds to the logic of its inclusion in the topic.
- You will notice that there are some blocks, with different colored verses, that refer to parables that help to understand the central theme.



- c. Other blocks, which do not contain verses, expose issues that you might touch on when presenting the study; issues that have historical, geographical, scientific, technical, and other backgrounds. You will find in this study some information that will help you expose these concepts.
- d. These two types of blocks are not necessarily included in all studies.
- e. The arrows indicate the logical sequence in which the author thinks these topics should be presented. The sequence is set from left to right and from top to bottom. However, your initiative and the knowledge about your listeners' needs may point you in a different direction. Let yourself be guided in prayer by the One who cannot err.

At the end of this graphic phase, you will find the study in detail, which will follow, as far as possible, the structure of the block diagram. Some complementary materials to the study will be included at the end. I recommend that you read them in advance to find the exact moment to include them in your presentation.

To the extent possible, I have presented the source of some of these topics so that you can extend your understanding by reviewing them. I do not pretend to know everything these sources deal with, so I encourage you to go deeper and tell me how to improve this content. I have included some images found on the Internet to make your reading more enjoyable, I hope you like them.

The written phase of the study will contain:

- a. Headings for the main subtopics.
- b. Bible quotes (in red).
- c. Quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy (in green).
- d. Quotations from books or articles by various authors, aimed at expanding your knowledge on the subject (in blue).
- e. Comments on the mentioned quotations; in some cases, these will be presented before the quotation, as an anticipation of the statement, while in others they will be placed after it as a confirmation of the concept being held (in black).
- f. Maps, chronograms, genealogies, and other diagrams where appropriate to the subject matter.
- g. Complementary material grouped in a section that helps to understand some of the aspects that could arise when dealing with the central theme with other people. Not all topics necessarily contain this material.

Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes from the Holy Bible are from the King James Modern Version, my favorite in English. Sometime I will include other versions to compare or expand the understanding of a text.

When you develop a Bible study on this subject with non-church people, I recommend that you use the section corresponding to the study (with the verses included in the block diagram) without presenting the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy. Discuss the accompanying materials as they come up in the exposition, as well as in the question and answer phase.

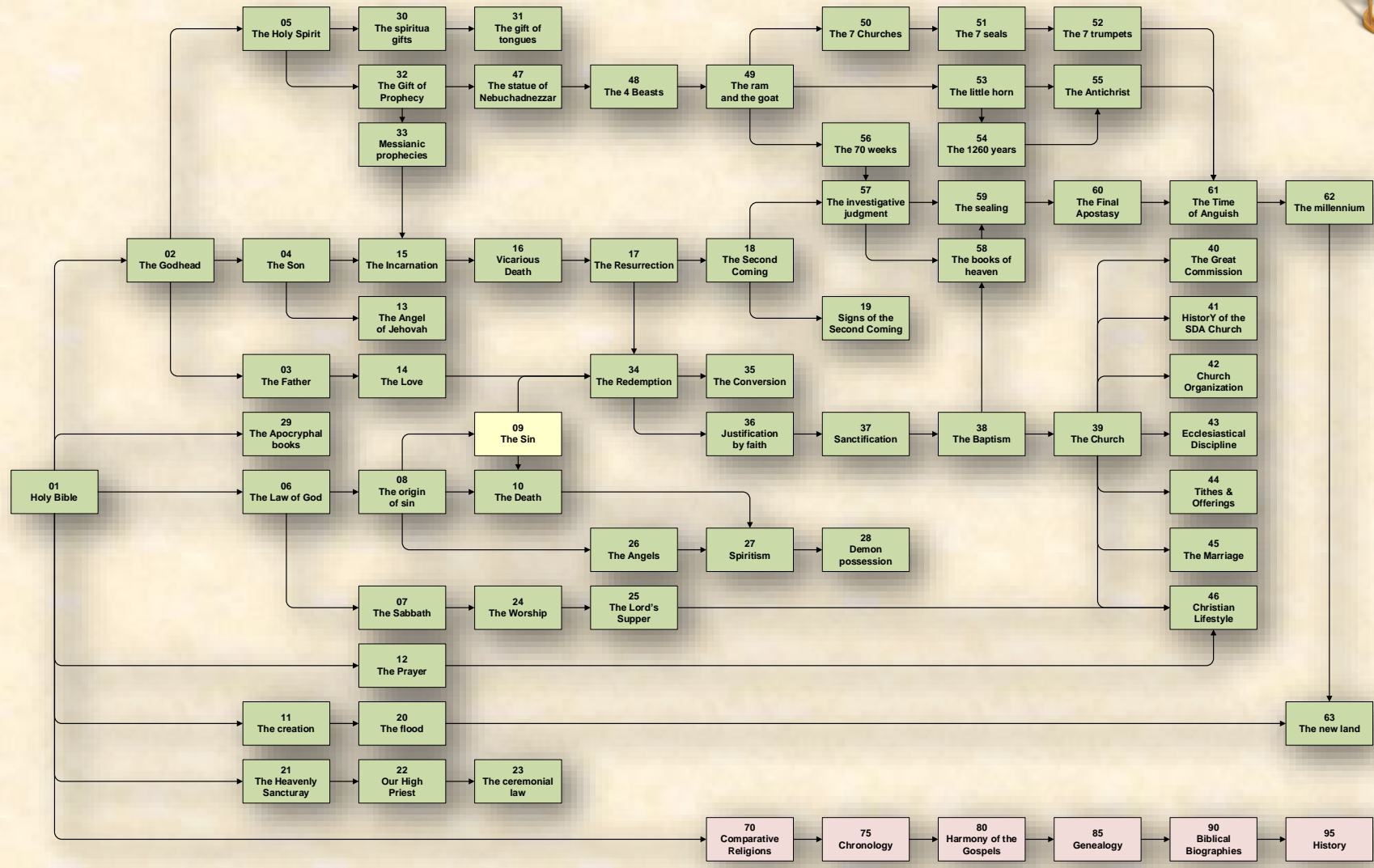
I have also prepared a file that includes all the block diagrams from the tracts so that they will be helpful to your memory when presenting the topic. I have also created a file with a copy of all the contents of the treatises so that you can review them without opening each of the documents, in case you are looking for a specific subtopic.

Allow me, as I have done so far, to address you personally during the study. I believe that this is how our Savior spoke to those He loved and wanted to save. Surely you will do the same with those who listen to you for this purpose.

This is a free material that has surely come to you from someone who appreciates you and wants you to know even more about Jesus and His wonderful plan of salvation. Spread the word in the same way, as you "have received freely, freely give" (**Matthew 10: 8**).

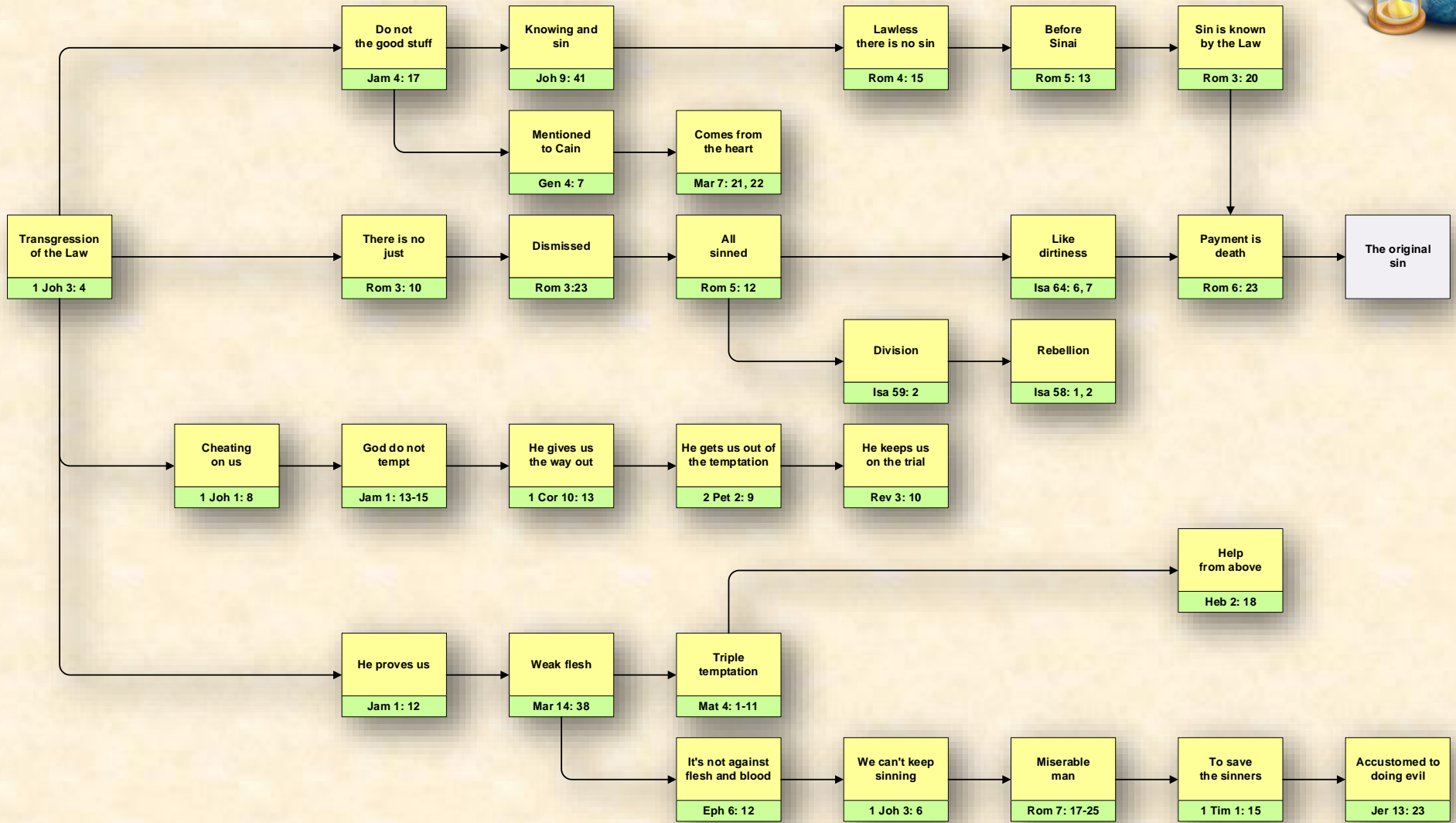


3. General Treatise Map





4. Treatise Map





5. Purpose of the Treatise

The purpose of the treatise is as follows:

- a. Define the concept of sin.
- b. Establish what the condition of the sinner is.
- c. Analyze the relationship between temptation and sin.
- d. Explain the unequal struggle against sin.
- e. Contrast the sins of action (commission) with those of omission.

6. Development of the theme

6.1. Introduction

We live in a time when almost nothing is considered a sin. Men have been "liberating" their minds from moral concepts in such a way that there are very few things that today are considered, let us say, unsuitable for this society. Even crimes like abortion are accepted under the logic that "every woman is master of her body". Infidelity on both sides is accepted with sayings like "love is over" and living together, out of marriage, is supported with words like "love is more important than a paper", while sharing the couple with others shows "maturity". Euthanasia is accepted as a lesser evil, i.e. something that can be done for the benefit of others "out of love", reaping the lives that only God can take.

If you ask a large number of individuals on the street, each one if he is a sinner, the vast majority will most likely say no. It would be even more serious among women because of the content that society gives to the concept of "sinner". It's just that we now think (I mean, most people do) that a sinner is something like a serial killer, or a child rapist, a pedophile, or things like that. We think that lying is okay if the cause is "good". Those who destroy their bodies with alcohol are considered happy people (have you seen the latest alcohol commercials?) and their example is highlighted as something worth imitating. Few voices oppose this trade that has destroyed so many lives...

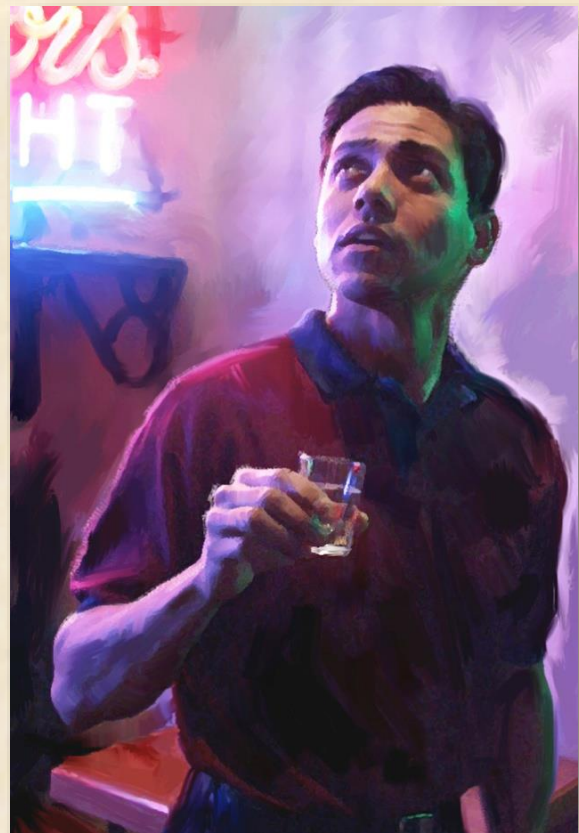
I have heard Christians plead for the death penalty in the face of the tide of immorality and violence that seems to sweep away the last bastions of purity and decency left in our world. It is not right to correct sin by proposing sin. We do not have the right as men to penalize someone by taking his life. That is for God alone. However outrageous some of these actions may be, we must hold before all people the thought that we cannot, therefore, violate God's law... by killing other human beings.

On the other hand, many times this growing tide of sin and cynicism regarding it seems to mute us and we do not raise the ugliness of sin in front of others. We are afraid of being considered fanatics or cuckoo's nest, we resist facing ridicule and we keep quiet...

We have an obligation before God to denounce sin with love and to hold that God hates sin, but loves the sinner, which we must imitate. We have a moral duty to rebuke with love those who fail, not because we are better or that we don't fall into the same thing, but to help each other understand how much sin has distorted our ability to distinguish good from evil.

6.2. Defining sin

Sin is corrupting in its nature. One man infected with its deadly leprosy may communicate the taint to thousands... Many dare not condemn iniquity, lest they shall thereby sacrifice position or





popularity. And by some, it is considered uncharitable to rebuke sin. The servant of God... is under the most solemn obligation to present the Word of God, without fear or favor. He must call sin by its right name...

The love of God will never lead to the belittling of sin; it will never cover or excuse an unconfessed wrong. Achan learned too late that God's law, like its Author, is unchanging. It has to do with all our acts and thoughts and feelings. It follows us and reaches every secret spring of action. By indulgence in sin, men are led to lightly regard the law of God. Many conceal their transgressions from their fellow men and flatter themselves that God will not be strict to mark iniquity. But His law is the great standard of right, and with it every act of life must be compared in that day when God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. Purity of heart will lead to purity of life. All excuses for sin are vain. Who can plead for the sinner when God testifies against him?

Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters of God, 214

God requires much more from his followers than many may realize... We must accept the Bible to the letter and believe that when the Lord says something, He means it. He never asks us for anything for which He is not willing to grant us His grace. If we fail to reach the standard set before us in His Word, we cannot make even one excuse in God's day.

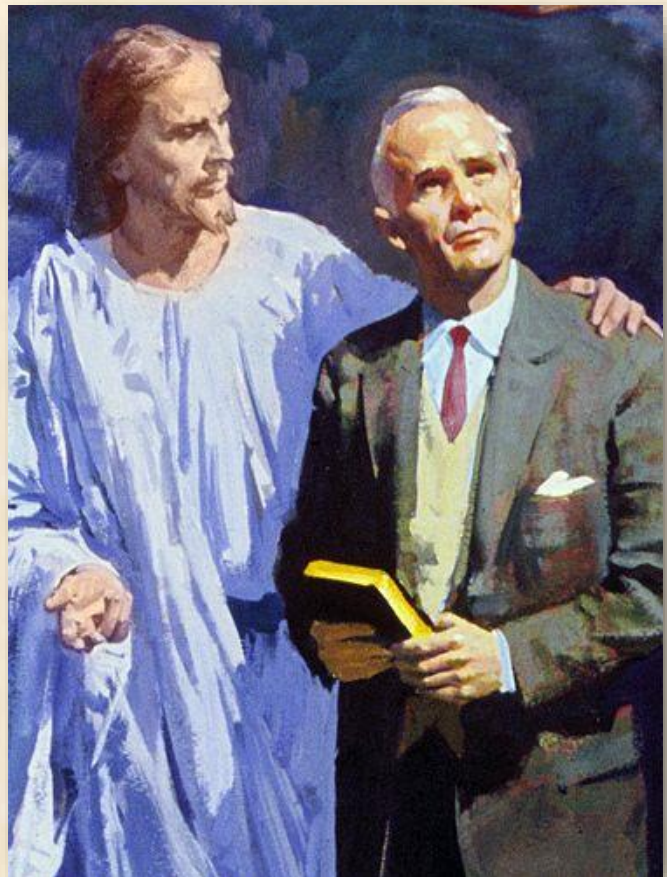
The Apostle admonishes us: "Let love be unfeigned. Hate what is evil, follow what is good. Love one another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" **Romans 12: 9, 10**. Paul wants us to distinguish between pure, unselfish love, motivated by the spirit of Christ, and that empty, deceptive pretense that the world calls love and in which it is so abundant. This base counterfeit has led many souls astray. Agreeing with the transgressor instead of faithfully showing him his errors tends to blur the distinction between good and evil. Such a course of action never originates in real friendship. The spirit that promotes it dwells only in the carnal heart. Though the Christian will always be kind, compassionate, and forgiving, he will never feel any kind of harmony with sin. He will abhor evil and cling to good at the cost of his relationship or friendship with the wicked. The spirit of Christ will lead us to hate sin, while we will be willing to make any sacrifice to save the sinner.

Ellen G. White, Exalting Jesus, 307 (translated by the author)

The erroneous concept of "situational ethics", that is, nothing is bad or good, but depends on the situation, has been perverting every moral fiber in this world. On the other hand, some digress on the subject of the origin of sin and blame God for its existence. Many times, in these cases, we also do not defend the honor of God when someone accuses God of being the culprit of this tsunami of evil that covers and muddies everything.

In some cases, those who blame God possess a distorted idea of the character of the Most High, an idea that they have formed based on concepts such as the eternal punishment of the wicked in the fires of hell and the apparent indifference of a God who allows suffering and evil to be perennialized. These people must be lovingly led to meet a loving God who is presented in the Holy Scriptures and who has been able to give up his Son for us; the most detached act of love that we can ever treasure in its real dimension.

To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation. And in their uncertainty and doubt, they are blinded to truths plainly revealed in God's word





and essential to salvation. There are those who, in their inquiries concerning the existence of sin, endeavor to search into that which God has never revealed; hence they find no solution of their difficulties; and such as are actuated by a disposition to doubt and cavil seize upon this as an excuse for rejecting the words of Holy Writ. Others, however, fail of a satisfactory understanding of the great problem of evil, from the fact that tradition and misinterpretation have obscured the teaching of the Bible concerning the character of God, the nature of His government, and the principles of His dealing with sin.

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence. Yet enough may be understood concerning both the origin and the final disposition of sin to make fully manifest the justice and benevolence of God in all His dealings with evil. Nothing is more plainly taught in Scripture than that God was in no wise responsible for the entrance of sin; that there was no arbitrary withdrawal of divine grace, no deficiency in the divine government, that gave occasion for the uprising of rebellion. Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin. Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is “**the transgression of the law**”; it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.

Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, 492, 493

The Word of God, therefore, defines sin succinctly:

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.

1 John 3: 4

The definition is simple. If I break the law, I sin. Therefore, all I need to determine whether or not I am a sinner is to compare my behavior with God's Holy Law. There is no need for analysis or forums to define what is good or bad. It is not a matter of surveys or the opinion of some experts. It is enough to accept what God teaches. Of course... this goes against what our perverted heart desires.

The world prefers to discuss the relevance of God's Law rather than accept His divine warnings. It questions good and evil, so it ends up confusing both. The carnal heart is grateful to be granted licenses to sin, licenses often granted by the same ministers of false religions.

The love of God always leads to the fear of God, the fear of offending Him. Those who are truly converted will take care not to be on the edge of evil, lest they grieve the Spirit of God, and are left to their own way and filled with their own chores. The Word of God is the Guidebook; do not depart from it to depend upon human instruments. It contains the warnings, the admonitions, the rebukes, the clear definition of sin as the transgression of the law, the great standard of virtue and holiness. The word is full of warnings, of merciful invitations, and condemnation of evil. No one who studies it and applies its teachings will err on the way.

Ellen G. White, Lift Up Your Eyes, 369

The Lord requires every man to be at his post of duty doing the very work the Lord has appointed to be done. Let every movement be preceded by humble, earnest prayer. The truth is to go forth as a lamp that burneth. Those who are guardians of the truth are to act as men who are wide awake...

Christ pronounces a woe upon all who transgress the law of God. He pronounced a woe upon the lawyers in His day because they exercised their power to afflict those who looked to them for justice and judgment. All the terrible consequences of sin will come to those who, even though they may be nominal church members, regard it as a light matter to set aside the law of Jehovah, and to make no distinction between good and evil.

Ellen G. White, This day with God, 222

But the Holy Bible also holds that sin is not only committed by action (by doing evil) but also by omission (by failing to do good). I consider this concept to be even more comprehensive than the other because the golden rule is to do good to others, not just to avoid doing evil. This includes calling them to repentance...

Therefore to him who knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

James 4: 17

A terrible doom awaits the sinner, and therefore it is necessary that we know what sin is, in order that we may escape from its power. John says, “**Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law**” (**1 John 3: 4**). Here we have the true definition of sin; it is “**the transgression of the law**”. How often the sinner is urged to leave his sins, and come to Jesus; but has the messenger who would lead him to Christ clearly pointed out the way? Has he clearly



pointed out the fact that “sin is the transgression of the law”, and that he must repent and forsake the breaking of God’s commandments? ...

God could not alter one jot or tittle of His holy law to meet man in his fallen condition; for this would reflect discredit upon the wisdom of God in making a law by which to govern heaven and earth.

But God could give His only-begotten Son to become man’s Substitute and Surety, to suffer the penalty that was merited by the transgressor, and to impart to the repentant soul His perfect righteousness. Christ became the sinless sacrifice for a guilty race, making men prisoners of hope, so that through repentance toward God because they had broken His holy law, and through faith in Christ as their Substitute, Surety, and righteousness, they might be brought back to loyalty to God and to obedience to His holy law.



**Ellen G. White,
Faith and Works,
117, 118**

Let us seek the Lord, His arms will always be ready to welcome us... let us go to Him with confidence, we will never be rejected by Him who is all love. Let us also recognize that the above verse is an appeal to do our Christian duty and be merciful to those who have fallen into disgrace, despite their strenuous efforts...

When a man is struggling with honest endeavor to sustain himself and his family, and yet is unable to do this, so that they suffer for necessary food and clothing, the Lord will not pronounce our ministering brethren guiltless if they look on with indifference or prescribe conditions for this brother which are virtually impossible of fulfillment ... We are to make the condition of the unfortunate brother our own.

Any neglect on the part of those who claim to be followers of Christ, a failure to relieve the necessities of a brother or a sister who is bearing the yoke of poverty and oppression, is registered in the books of heaven as shown to Christ in the person of His saints. What a reckoning the Lord will have with many, very many, who present the words of Christ to others but fail to manifest tender sympathy and regard for a brother in the faith who is less fortunate and successful than themselves...

If you knew the circumstances of this brother, and did not make earnest efforts to relieve him, and change his oppression to freedom, you are not working the works of Christ, and are guilty before God. I write plainly, for, from the light given me of God, there is a class of work that is neglected.

There may be great interest taken in the wholesale business of feeding the wretched class who are in poverty. All this I have no objection to, but it is a misdirected zeal if we pass by the cases of these who are of the household of faith and let their cry of distress come up to God because of suffering which we might alleviate, and in thus doing represent Jesus Christ in sympathy and love. The Lord has a controversy with us for this neglect. He cannot say to any man or woman, “well done” unless they have done well in representing the attributes of Christ—goodness, compassion, and love—to their fellow men.

Ellen G. White, Welfare Ministry, 210, 211

A key aspect of understanding sin is the knowledge of the truth. Jesus says that if we did not know the truth, we would not be guilty, but by knowing what the truth is, then “sin remains”. Jesus addresses this reasoning to the church leaders of that time, telling them that knowing the truth makes their sin remain. Jesus reiterates that if they did not know (an assumption denied in the case of these leaders) they would be sinless.

The question is, don't today's religious leaders know that God's law is in force? Why then do they teach people otherwise? Why is active homosexuality accepted even among ministers in certain



denominations? Why do some of these denominations not take a principled stand on homosexual marriage? Why are rights to abortion recognized when it is a crime according to the commandment: do not kill? Why is adultery, abandoning one's wife from one's youth, depriving one's children of the presence and support of a father (or mother, which is becoming unfortunately as frequent as the other) not condemned from the pulpit as before?

We could go on ad infinitum... but the point is clear. Man, consciously opposes God's will, resists the work of the Holy Spirit, refuses to acknowledge sin, prefers to live in the "delights" of sin than to deny himself, and abandon it. The world closes its ears to the cry of God who sees His law trampled underfoot and His wise commandments reduced to suggestions not accepted in such an "advanced" society.

Jesus said to them, if you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, we see. Therefore, your sin remains.

John 9: 41

It is our duty to make our voice heard in repressing sin, to present to the world the decadent moral condition that goes unnoticed by the majority. Especially now that time is running out... when the trial is about to end.

As you see the peril and misery of the world under the working of Satan, do not exhaust your God-given energies in idle lamentations, but go to work for yourselves and for others. Awake, and feel a burden for those who are perishing. If they are not won to Christ, they will lose an eternity of bliss. Think of what it is possible for them to gain. The soul that God has created and Christ has redeemed is of great value because of the possibilities before it, the spiritual advantages that have been granted it, the capabilities it may possess if vitalized by the word of God, and the immortality which through the Life-giver it may obtain if obedient. One soul is of more value to heaven than a whole world of property, houses, lands, money. For the conversion of one soul, we should tax our resources to the utmost. One soul won to Christ will flash heaven's light all around him, penetrating the moral darkness and saving other souls.

If Christ left the ninety and nine, that He might seek and save the one lost sheep, can we be justified in doing less? Is not a neglect to work even as Christ worked, to sacrifice as He sacrificed, a betrayal of sacred trusts, an insult to God?

Sound an alarm throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Tell the people that the day of the Lord is near and hasteth greatly. Let none be left unwarned. We might have been in the place of the poor souls that are in error. We might have been placed among barbarians. According to the truth we have received above others, we are debtors to impart the same to them.

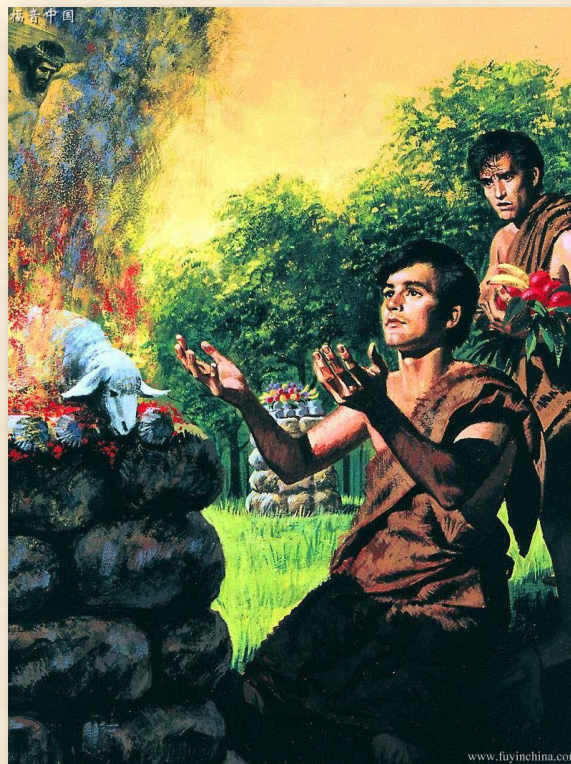
Ellen G. White, Testimony Treasures, Volume II, 375

When Cain had presented his offering to God (a vegetable offering in place of the bloody sacrifice of a lamb as God had commanded) and it had not been accepted, Cain's spirit declined. God tells him that if he did good, he would be exalted (and his sacrifice accepted as in Abel's case). This evidences that Cain knew well what God had decreed. Despite this, God tells him that he must face sin, that he must fight against it, that if he does so, he can overcome. It is transcendent to point out that Cain's condition, at that precise moment, was that he was in a moment of temptation since God tells him that "sin crouches at the door". This sin, against which his mind was already struggling, was to wish evil upon his brother, a situation that as we well know led to the murder of Abel.

If you do well, shall you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin crouches at the door; and its desire is for you, and you shall rule over it.

Genesis 4: 7

Since we are evil (contrary to the general opinion held by many, that we are intrinsically good, a thought pleasing to the carnal heart) it is from within that our tendencies to evil arise.





Thus, says the Lord, the source of evil is our own heart. The change to face sin has to occur in the heart as well but by the intervention of the Spirit of God.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

Mark 7: 21, 22

Even the thoughts must be brought into subjection to the will of God, and the feelings under the control of reason and religion. Our imagination was not given us to be allowed to run riot and have its own way, without any effort at restraint and discipline. If the thoughts are wrong, the feelings will be wrong; and the thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character.



The power of right thought is more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir... We need to place a high value upon the right control of our thoughts, for such control prepares the mind and soul to labor harmoniously for the Master. It is necessary for our peace and happiness in this life that our thoughts center in Christ. As a man thinketh, so is he. Our improvement in moral purity depends on right thinking and right acting... Evil thoughts destroy the soul. The converting power of God changes the heart, refining, and purifying the thoughts. Unless a determined effort is made to keep the thoughts centered on Christ, grace cannot reveal itself in the life. The mind must engage in the spiritual warfare. Every thought must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. All the habits must be brought under God's control.

We need a constant sense of the ennobling power of pure thoughts and the damaging influence of evil thoughts. Let us place our thoughts upon holy things. Let them be pure and true, for the only security for any soul is right thinking. We are to use every means that God has placed within our reach for the government and cultivation of our thoughts. We are to bring our minds into harmony with His mind. His truth will sanctify us, body and soul, and spirit, and we shall be enabled to rise above temptation.

Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, 164

As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (**Proverbs 23: 7**). Many thoughts make up the unwritten history of a single day, and these thoughts have much to do with the formation of character. Our thoughts are to be strictly guarded, for one impure thought makes a deep impression on the soul. An evil thought leaves an evil impress on the mind. If the thoughts are pure and holy, the man is better for having cherished them. By them the spiritual pulse is quickened and the power for doing good is increased. And as one drop of rain prepares the way for another in moistening the earth, so one good thought prepares the way for another.

It is within the power of everyone to choose the topics that shall occupy the thoughts and shape the character.

No one but yourself can control your thoughts. In the struggle to reach the highest standard, success or failure will depend much upon the character and the manner in which the thoughts are disciplined. If the thoughts are well girded, as God directs they shall be each day, they will be upon those subjects that will help us to greater devotion. If the thoughts are right, then as a result the words will be right; the actions will be of that character to bring gladness and comfort and rest to souls.

The thoughts must be trained. Gird up the loins of the mind that it shall work in the right direction and after the order of well-formed plans; then every step is one in advance, and no effort or time is lost in following vague ideas and random plans. We must consider the aim and object of life,



and ever keep worthy purposes in view. Every day the thoughts should be trained and kept to the point as the compass to the pole. Everyone should have his aims and purposes, and then make every thought and action of that character to accomplish that which he purposes. The thoughts must be controlled. There must be a fixedness of purpose to carry out that which you shall undertake.

Ellen G. White, Mind, Character and Personality, Volume II, 655, 656

Some Christians reason that the law is no longer binding on the Christian. They assume that it has been nailed to the cross and is no longer a paradigm for the true follower of Jesus Christ. However, their mind-boggling thoughts must face the clarity of biblical arguments. Paul says that “**where no law is, there is no transgression**”, that is, without law, there is no sin, if there is no sin, then what or for whom did Jesus die? If the law could be set aside, changed (as some have done) or abrogated (as others suppose), then that was the way to avoid Jesus having to be offered as a ransom for the sinner.

because the Law works out wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Romans 4: 15

When the Law had not yet been remembered at Sinai, it was evident that sin was rampant in the world (perhaps a little less than now), which implied that the Law was in force and was known. It is understood that it was not possible for God's Law to be just revealed at Sinai, if God's demand for obedience to His commandments and laws already existed. This is what Paul argues in the verse quoted below. If he had sinned before Sinai (as is more than evident), then the law must also exist.

for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Romans 5: 13

Rejecting the Law ignores the source of knowledge needed to understand sin. Thanks to the Law, we do not need to ask ourselves what is good or bad. Look into the perfect Law and you will know. Also, see how Jesus magnified it. The Law can only point out our condition, it has no ability to save us from the consequences of our sins already committed. It can show us what good is, as when a mirror reveals our condition, but it cannot deliver us from evil.

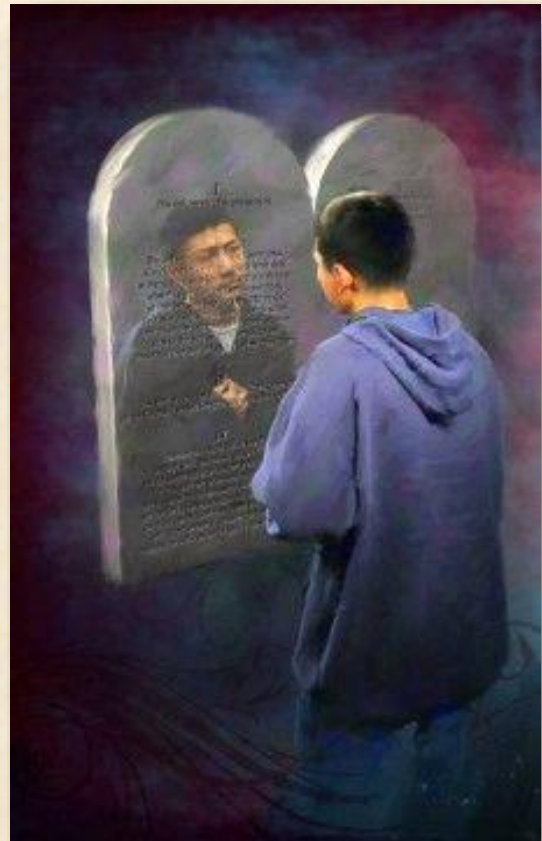
because by the works of the Law none of all flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 3: 20

Many are led to think that they are on the road to heaven because they profess to believe in Christ, while they reject the law of God. But they will find at last that they were on the way to perdition instead of heaven. Spiritual poison is sugarcoated with the doctrine of sanctification, and administered to the people. Thousands eagerly swallow it, feeling that if they are only honest in their belief, they will be safe. But sincerity will not convert error to truth. A man may swallow poison, thinking it is food; but his sincerity will not save him from the effects of the dose.

God has given us His Word to be our guide. Christ has said, “**Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me**” (**John 5: 39**). He prayed for His disciples, “**Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth**” (**John 17: 17**). Paul says, “**I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth**” (**Acts 26: 9**). But this belief did not make his course right. When Paul received the gospel of Jesus Christ, it made him a new creature. He was transformed; the truth planted in his soul gave him such faith and courage as a follower of Christ that no opposition could move him, no suffering daunt him.

Men may make what excuse they please for their rejection of God's law; but no excuse will be accepted in the day of judgment. Those who are contending with God and strengthening their guilty





souls in transgression must very soon meet the Great Lawgiver over His broken law.

Ellen G. White, Faith and Works, 32, 33

6.3. The human condition

Acknowledging the existence of sin, as we said, is something that the present generation does not do. The general picture has been created that there is no need to repent. I do not know if you have noticed that people say arrogantly, as if it were merit or something worthy of imitation: "I have nothing to repent of".

This happens especially among people who appear in the newspapers: artists, politicians, elite sportsmen... Indisputably, by not accepting themselves as sinners, people think of themselves as just. The Word of God maintains the opposite, it says no one is just, "no not one". It is painful that this should happen among those who do not know God, but it is doubly painful that it should continue among those who profess to love God.

Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to give your poor unworthy selves to Jesus? Will you choose the hopeless bondage of sin and death rather than to have your life severed from the world and united to Christ by bonds of love? Jesus still lives to intercede for us. This should daily call out the gratitude of our hearts. He that realizes his guilt and helplessness may come just as he is and receive the blessing of God. The promise belongs to him if he will grasp it by faith. But he that in his own eyes is rich, and honorable, and righteous, who sees as the world sees, and calls evil good and good evil, cannot ask and receive, because he feels no need. He feels that he is full; therefore, he must go away empty.

Ellen G. White, Testimony Treasures, Volume II, 140, 141

as it is written: there is none righteous, no not one;

Romans 3: 10

Of course, this society of ours has gone to extremes. This is especially true of young people, although it is also true of many adults, especially men. When someone is told that he is good, he rebukes that he is not, he is offended, he thinks that to accept that he is good is to be a kind of "nerd", a dumb-ass, a good-for-nothing, someone who is no fun. Well... here we are. Purity or goodness is considered a characteristic of the weak, while the more seasoned maintain that it is contrary to manhood and is a trait of lack of masculinity. Young women today behave like men, drink and swear like them to show that they are cool, as well as to exhibit their apparent independence from all rules. This behavior, however, is not considered sinful.



The truth is that Paul says that we all "come short of the glory of God" because we have all sinned.

for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,

Romans 3: 23

We often blame Adam (more often than not, in fact, Eve) because he sinned in Eden and has brought upon us all this ruin that is society and the world today. It is true that our first parents made a serious mistake, but it is also true that we have followed them and overcome (this is for sure) our degree of evil. We are responsible individually and not only as a human species. Let us recognize that we deserve death, not because we are descended from a mortal race, but because we have sinned individually. Let us seek the arms of our Savior.

Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned:

Romans 5: 12

Beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, he finds the peace of Christ; for pardon is written against his name, and he accepts the Word of God,



“Ye are complete in Him” (**Colossians 2: 10**). How hard is it for humanity, long accustomed to cherish doubt, to grasp this great truth! But what peace it brings to the soul, what vital life! In looking to ourselves for righteousness, by which to find acceptance with God, we look to the wrong place, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (**Romans 3: 23**). We are to look to Jesus; for “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory” (**2 Corinthians 3: 18**). You are to find your completeness by beholding the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Standing before the broken law of God, the sinner cannot cleanse himself; but, believing in Christ, he is the object of His infinite love and clothed in His spotless righteousness. For those who believe in Christ, Jesus prayed: “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth: ...that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one” (**John 17: 17-22**). “O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (**John 17: 25, 26**).

Ellen G. White, Faith and Works, 108

The worst thing about our condition is that we have alienated God from our lives. We have tried to live independently of Him without knowing that turning away from the source of life is equivalent to death. Unfortunately, without a change in the direction of our life, God cannot hear our prayers, because “iniquities have come between you and your God”. Sin destroys the relationship between God and man, just as it destroys human relationships in the short or long run.

But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, from hearing.

Isaiah 59: 2

Notice how clearly God speaks to His people when they are in this condition. He tells his prophet to cry out by showing Israel their situation. He tells them that even though they seem to want to get close to him, they do not really live as God has taught them. Note that it is not possible to access God if one is living in sin, far from Him. The people seemed to be looking for God, they had an external image of justice, which could be the same as ours, apparently good people, but in reality, very far from God's will.

Cry aloud, do not spare, lift up your voice like a ram's horn, and show My people their rebellion, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and one who did not forget the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in drawing near to God.

Isaiah 58: 1, 2

The condition, detailed by the prophet below, is distressing. The menstruation cloth was the ancient equivalent of a woman's sanitary napkin. Obviously, it is a necessary item, but hardly anyone would think of displaying it. That is how our apparent righteousness is to God, that is, the “best” of us. I am impressed that the prophet calls us “filth” and says that “our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”. It implies that our state in sin is calamitous, that we deserve nothing but death. But the worst thing is that he says that there is no one to call upon the name of the Lord. No one seems to be aware of their state. To meditate... looking inward.

But we are all as the unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as a menstruation cloth. And we all fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs up himself to take hold of You. For You have hidden Your face from us, and have melted us away because of our iniquities.

Isaiah 64: 6, 7

The white robe of innocence was worn by





our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God... A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair... But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

We cannot provide a robe of righteousness for ourselves, for the prophet says, "All our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64: 6). There is nothing in us from which we can clothe the soul so that its nakedness shall not appear. We are to receive the robe of righteousness woven in the loom of heaven, even the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness.

Ellen G. White, Our Father cares, 199

This condition, then and now, is desperate, because "the wages of sin is death". Thank God the verse doesn't end there. There is hope for us in Jesus.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6: 23

6.4. The temptation is not a sin

We must distinguish temptation from sin. It is not the same to be tempted as to sin. There is no moral deterioration during temptation if it is resisted, that is if man triumphs against it. However, we should consider one concept: it is not the same to have sinned as to have sin. It is interesting to analyze what John says here:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1: 8

John is not pointing to a person who has sinned, but who has sin (lives with sin on his back, has not been forgiven) and refuses to accept it. The problem is not having sinned (understand me well, I am not saying that sinning is okay) but denying that we are in that condition. I believe that all of us who have accepted the Lord Jesus as our personal Savior recognize our condition as sinners. We have a natural tendency to the evil that we cannot overcome without the powerful intervention of God's Spirit in our lives. This leaves us, humanly speaking, generally at a disadvantage in facing temptation or the tempter.

Let me explain the word "generally". Sin or type of sin has a different capacity to attract us, depending on our innate inclinations. While some people may suffer the ravages of temptation when offered liquor, for others this concept is so repulsive or so distant from their desires or needs that resisting it seems simple. The problem is that the one who does not suffer from being tempted into a particular kind of sin, if he does it with many other kinds, when he is "drawn away and seduced by them".

On the other hand, we must make it clear that although the temptation is a moment of testing Christian character, it does not come from God, because God does not "tempts no one"; rather, it is our natural inclinations to the evil that push us there. Notice the sequence that James teaches: lust (disordered desires), sin, and death.

Let no one being tempted say, I am tempted from God. For God is not tempted by evils, and He tempts no one. But each one is tempted by his lusts, being drawn away and seduced by them. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin. And sin, when it is fully formed, brings forth death.

James 1: 13-15

The existence of temptation, however, does not justify sin; we can resist it by the power of God. Paul says that we can resist because God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength. This thought may raise several questions whose answers are more or less obvious:

- Do all people have the same spiritual strength? No.
- Can the strongest (spiritually speaking) have temptations to a greater degree? Yes.
- Isn't it unfair that the strongest have to endure more severe temptations? I don't think so, but I think the devil knows that if he makes leaders, rulers, or exemplary people fall, he produces more evil.
- Is it not better then to be unprepared for





gentle temptations? No, weakness only ensures more falls. Continuous prayer, for example, gives strength to everyone.

No temptation has taken you but what is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but with the temptation also will make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear it.

1 Corinthians 10: 13

I am also pleased that Paul says that God “also will make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear it”. This assures us that we can resist. We should not say things like “the temptation was too much for me”, because it will not be true. Paul further relates this strength, to resist, to God’s faithfulness. I’m sure we can trust Him.

The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust for a day of judgment, to be punished,

2 Peter 2: 9

Peter reiterates that although we may be tempted, the Lord can “deliver the godly out of temptation”. You know, the fight against temptation does not begin when we are tempted. It begins when we prepare ourselves to face it, when we are in prayer asking God to change our character and inclination to evil when we study God’s Word to find guidance for our decisions, when we avoid placing ourselves in the places or moments where we may be tempted.

The ability to resist temptation must be increased when we are not tempted. Relying on our own strength will be useless. We need God’s transforming power in our lives.

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”. And we also have a part to act. We are not to place ourselves needlessly in the way of temptation. God says, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ...and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters”. If by associating with worldlings for pleasure, by conforming to worldly practices, by uniting our interests with unbelievers, we place our feet in the path of temptation and sin, how can we expect God to keep us from falling?



Keep yourselves away from the corrupting influences of the world. Do not go unbidden to places where the forces of the enemy are strongly entrenched.

Do not go where you will be tempted and led astray. But if you have a message for unbelievers, and if you live so near to God that you can speak to them a word in season, you can do a work that will help them and will honor God. “I pray not”, Christ said, “that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil”.

Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People, 81, 82

Because you have kept the Word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation which will come upon all the habitable world, to try those who dwell upon the earth.

Revelation 3: 10

Untried character is not reliable. We are to be tried by temptation in order that we may learn to seek wisdom from God and to flee to the stronghold in time of trouble. He alone will be successful in resisting temptation who finds help and grace from God. Individually we stand as did our first parents—face to face with manifold temptations that solicit

mind and heart. All heaven is watching with intense interest to see whether we will look unto Jesus and submit ourselves to His will, or whether in the temptation we shall follow the inclinations of the natural heart and the solicitations of the evil one.

Let those who are perplexed with temptation go to God in prayer... Persevere in prayer and watch thereunto without doubting, and the Holy Spirit will work in the human agent, bringing heart and mind into subjection to right principles.

Ellen G. White, That I may know Him, 276

We must especially pray for what will be the supreme test when we enter the end of time and must endure those bad times. The Lord’s promise is that He will keep us in “the hour of temptation which will come



upon all the habitable world, to try those who dwell upon the earth". I am confident that it will be so, but I must not slacken in my personal preparation.

6.5. Tested

We are tested, to see if we are faithful, by temptation. Let us remember, however, that temptation does not come from God but the enemy of our souls. Love for God does not consist in a burst of rapture where we tell Him with tears in our eyes that we love Him (though sometimes this can happen); love is tested by obedience, if we resist temptation we are blessed. The reward for one who struggles to succeed in these trials is "the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him".

Blessed is the man who endures temptation, because having been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

James 1: 12

What is temptation? It is the means by which those who claim to be the children of God are tested and tried. We read that God tempted Abraham, that He tempted the children of Israel. This means that He permitted circumstances to occur to test their faith and lead them to look to Him for help. God permits temptation to come to His people today that they may realize that He is their helper. If they draw nigh to Him when they are tempted, He strengthens them to meet the temptation...

Temptations will pour in upon us, for by them we are to be tried during our probation. This is the proving of God, the revelation of our own hearts. There is no sin in having temptation, but sin comes in when temptation is yielded to...

Ellen G. White, In Heavenly Places, 251

The problem of our souls lies in our flesh, which is prone to evil and weak to resist temptation. That is why the Lord urges us to pray that we do not fall into temptation. But remember, prayer at the time of temptation is timely but complementary. We need strength before temptation assails us.

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Truly the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Mark 14: 38

After his baptism, Jesus went into the desert where the enemy assaulted him with the strongest temptations. After 40 days without tasting food, dedicated to prayer, Jesus felt in his flesh the affliction of the lack of material food, but he was, as always, spiritually prepared.

When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men".

Isaiah 52: 14. Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ.

Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, 118



When Satan appeared, he did so as an angel of light. He told Jesus that there had been a rebellion in heaven, that an important angel had fallen and that Jesus was that angel. To an outside observer, the comparison was against Jesus. On the one hand, a beautiful angel covered with splendid light, with his beautiful flapping wings spoke (apparently) to a human being, probably dirty, dusty, exhausted, sweaty, surely lying on some stone to support his bodily weakness. The first temptation seemed natural then, "If you are the Son of God, say that these stones should become bread", as is natural appetite and as it seems



natural to defend that Jesus is really the Son of God and not the heavenly rebel, the fallen angel. Yet Jesus knew who He was. At His baptism 40 days earlier, He had heard a heavenly voice proclaiming His bond with the Father. That is why He said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God", because we must trust what God says, His word is truth.

When Satan and the Son of God first met in conflict, Christ was the commander of the heavenly hosts; and Satan, the leader of revolt in heaven, was cast out. Now their condition is apparently reversed, and Satan makes the most of his supposed advantage. One of the most powerful of the angels, he says, has been banished from heaven. The appearance of Jesus indicates that He is that fallen angel, forsaken by God, and deserted by man. A divine being would be able to sustain his claim by working a miracle; "if Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread". Such an act of creative power, urges the tempter, would be conclusive evidence of divinity. It would bring the controversy to an end.

Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 119

Seeing that he accomplished nothing by attacking at the level of appetite, the tempter took him "to the pinnacle of the temple" and invited him to jump to prove his divine sonship. Moreover, he quoted Scripture (partly of course) to deceive. Jesus responded that He could not tempt God by putting Himself in danger of death; this would have been a demonstration of presumption (the Satanic counterfeit of faith). How often will we be confronted in what we believe with quotes from the Bible, taken out of context; if we are not prepared, knowing the true content of Scripture, we will be deceived.

But faith is in no sense allied to presumption. Only he who has true faith is secure against presumption. For presumption is Satan's counterfeit of faith. Faith claims God's promises, and brings forth fruit in obedience. Presumption also claims the promises, but uses them as Satan did, to excuse transgression. Faith would have led our first parents to trust the love of God, and to obey His commands. Presumption led them to transgress His law, believing that His great love would save them from the consequence of their sin. It is not faith that claims the favor of Heaven without complying with the conditions on which mercy is to be granted. Genuine faith has its foundation in the promises and provisions of the Scriptures.

Often when Satan has failed of exciting distrust, he succeeds in leading us to presumption. If he can cause us to place ourselves unnecessarily in the way of temptation, he knows that the victory is his. God will preserve all who walk in the path of obedience; but to depart from it is to venture on Satan's ground. There we are sure to fall. The Saviour has bidden us, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation". **Mark 14: 38**. Meditation and prayer would keep us from rushing unbidden into the way of danger, and thus we should be saved from many a defeat.

Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 126

Finally, he took him to "a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory". I'd like to stop here. There is no mountain that I know of from which "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" can be seen; therefore Satan here used his power to bring before Jesus a vision of the glory of the world which he has usurped and to convince Him to bow down before it and worship it.



By offering the goods, the fortune, and the glory of this world, Satan is more successful with us. These things wrongly make us lose sight of eternal things, but it did not happen with the Savior. Satan

wanted Jesus to take a shortcut; you have come to this world to save it, well I give it to you, but bow down before me. Satan desired the place of God and consequently the worship to which God is entitled. We know the Master's answer. Let us learn from Him to renounce those things that keep us from God.

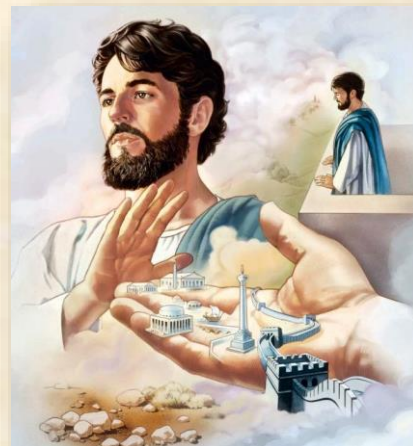
Then Jesus was led by the Spirit up into the wilderness, to be tempted by the Devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards hungry. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If You are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, it is written, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God". Then the Devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him upon a pinnacle of the Temple. And he said to Him, if you are the Son of God, cast yourself down. For it is written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands, they shall bear You up, lest at any time You dash Your foot against a stone". Jesus said to him, it is written again, "You shall not



tempt the Lord your God". Again, the Devil took Him up into a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, all these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him, Go, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve". Then the Devil left him. And behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Matthew 4: 1-11

In the wilderness of temptation Christ met the great leading temptations that would assail man. There He encountered, single-handed, the wily, subtle foe, and overcame him. The first great temptation was upon appetite; the second, presumption; the third, love of the world. Satan has overcome his millions by tempting them to the indulgence of appetite. Through the gratification of the taste, the nervous system becomes excited and the brainpower enfeebled, making it impossible to think calmly or rationally. The mind is unbalanced. Its higher, nobler faculties are perverted to serve animal lusts, and the sacred, eternal interests are not regarded. When this object is gained, Satan can come with his two other leading temptations and find ready access. His manifold temptations grow out of these three great leading points.



Presumption is a common temptation, and as Satan assails men with this, he obtains the victory nine times out of ten. Those who profess to be followers of Christ, and claim by their faith to be enlisted in the warfare against all evil in their nature, frequently plunge without thought into temptations from which it would require a miracle to bring them forth unscathed. Meditation and prayer would have preserved them and led them to shun the critical, dangerous position in which they placed themselves when they gave Satan the advantage over them. The promises of God are not for us rashly to claim while we rush on recklessly into danger, violating the laws of nature and disregarding prudence and the judgment with which God has endowed us. This is the most flagrant presumption.

The thrones and kingdoms of the world and the glory of them were offered to Christ if He would only bow down to Satan. Never will man be tried with temptations as powerful as those which assailed Christ. Satan came with worldly honor, wealth, and the pleasures of life, and presented them in the most attractive light to allure and deceive. "All these things", said he to Christ, "will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me". Christ repelled the wily foe and came off victor...

Christ's example is before us. He overcame Satan, showing us how we may also overcome. Christ resisted Satan with Scripture. He might have had recourse to His own divine power, and used His own words; but He said: "It is written" ... If the Sacred Scriptures were studied and followed, the Christian would be fortified to meet the wily foe...

Ellen G. White, Lift Him Up, 80

Not only on this occasion, but throughout his life, the Savior had to face the harshest temptation. Even in the terrible moments of his passion. But He never failed, He never gave in to temptation, so He is an example to us, but He is also our timely help.

For in that He Himself has suffered, having been tempted, He is able to rescue those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 2: 18

6.6. A permanent struggle

We need God's help to face temptation. Our spiritual nature, battered by a 6,000-year heritage of sin, is not exactly helpful in this millennial struggle. We need God's power to successfully face the temptation that always comes our way in what we are weakest. Of course, the enemy knows what my weaknesses are. In a conversation with a very dear church brother, he told me how Satan had once tempted him. I jokingly told him that it must not have been Satan. I told him that he would be very busy with people more important than he and I. Undoubtedly, I told him, we will have some third- or fourth-class demons as our adversaries. Satan will certainly be influencing the great rulers of this world or trying to oppose the leaders of God's people, trying to influence the leaders of the world... It's just that Satan would be too much for us...

Joking aside, that's the reality. We have formidable enemies whom we cannot confront, because "we do not wrestle against flesh and blood"; that is to say, we do not compete or struggle against beings of our



own capacity, we struggle against fallen angels who retain an immense power, which far surpasses our human forces, whose intelligences dedicated to evil surpass the most intelligent of men. It is an unequal struggle, I correct myself, it would be an unequal struggle if we did not have the power of God at our disposal.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world's rulers, of the darkness of this age, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Ephesians 6: 12

The secret of triumph in this struggle is to remain in Jesus, to be at His side, to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit.

The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

Ellen G. White, Evangelism, 617



Everyone who abides in Him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen Him nor known Him.

1 John 3: 6

The struggle is and will be difficult. Paul, before whom I stand with great respect, perhaps the greatest of the Apostles, a true champion of the Gospel, had to endure a tremendous struggle to remain faithful. His own account of this struggle should give us pause for thought.

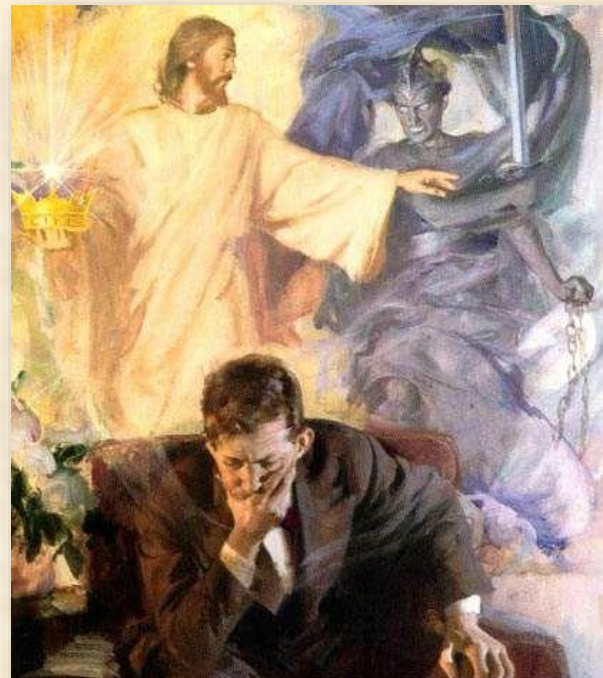
But now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I do not find. For I do not do the good that I desire; but the evil which I do not will, that I do. But if I do what I do not desire, it is no more I working it out, but sin dwelling in me. I find then a law: when I will to do the right, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin being in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans 7: 17-25

That law which Paul finds in his members is his natural inclination, the animal man, who dwells in us, who resists death. He is not a separate entity from us, we are ourselves, our sinful habits struggling to remain. Paul has a struggle that is like his or mine. We fight because we want to be like Jesus, but it seems that our strength is not enough. Happily, we can meet Jesus and like Paul give thanks to "God through Jesus Christ our Lord", who wants to give us the crown of final victory.

Through the plan of redemption, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong.

The strongest temptation is no excuse for sin. However great the pressure brought to bear upon the





soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel any one to sin. The will must consent, the heart must yield, or passion cannot overbear reason, nor iniquity triumph over righteousness.

If you will stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel, faithfully doing His service, you need never yield to temptation; for One stands by your side who is able to keep you from falling.

We need not retain one sinful propensity... As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.

Ellen G. White, Our Father cares, 331

I remembered, while writing, an anecdote that someone told me or read to me, I'm not really sure... but I'll tell you. A prayer meeting was attended by several church members who were regular participants. Among them was a sister who was very inclined to long prayers in public... To the bewilderment of some, this good sister asked to do one of the closing prayers of the meeting, the other would be done by a brother who used not to enjoy precisely the prayers of this lady. As was her custom to do, at one point in the prayer she said: "Please Lord, remove the cobwebs from my heart". She had already used this figure of speech a few times... When it was the brother's turn, he asked the Lord to kill the spider in our good sister's heart.

The anecdote is a little light, but it exemplifies something very important. It is important to eliminate the causes and not the consequences. Cleaning the web time after time without killing the spider does not solve the problem. Where do your fights against evil come from, my brother, or mine? Is it not wiser to eliminate the causes of these fights than to face them daily?

We must move away from the places or moments in which we are tempted, we must flee from the situations that place us in front of temptation, we must close to the avenues of the soul the access to television programs or readings that make it difficult for us to follow the Lord. Let us instead dedicate time to prayer, to witness, to study the Word of God, to work for the Church and our diminished capacities will be improved.

Faithful is the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

1 Timothy 1: 15

Despite this, with gratitude, I look to Jesus my Savior, and say like Paul that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief". But beware, He did not come to save us in our sins but from our sins.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard its spots? Then you also may do good, who are accustomed to doing evil.

Jeremiah 13: 23

Jeremiah also speaks a truth as great and visible as a tower, we cannot change our heart. Our natural tendency is to evil. Only God can transform us... to Him be the glory.

7. Complementary material

7.1. Original sin

The concept of "original sin" does not appear as such in Scripture, nor does the Trinity. It is rather a theological term to define the way in which Catholicism understands the consequences of the sin of our first parents. The catechism's definition of original sin is: "guilt and stain that we inherit from Adam, who was the origin and head of all humanity".

Catholicism holds that since we were all born with this sin, we need baptism (as infants, of course) to be free of it. This doctrine forgets the importance of acceptance of Jesus as Savior and repentance, matters that must precede baptism, things that would be impossible for a baby.

We have studied that sin is a transgression of the Law, so a newborn child could not be considered a sinner, if it has not yet committed such a transgression. It is different to consider that we are born with evil tendencies, that we are born sinful. Some Adventist writers such as Edward Heppenstall use the term original sin to refer to a tendency to sin and not to an amount of guilt with which we are supposed to be born. It is



understood that if the child at birth is guilty of this sin, then it would deserve eternal death, which as we have studied is the wages of sin. We recognize that we have the tendency to evil inherited from Adam, but not the guilt. The Bible holds that death has passed on to men because they all sinned, not because they were born.

The doctrine of original sin begins with the so-called Latin Fathers (although many of them do not agree on this, nor do the earlier Greek Fathers) and is consolidated with Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD). The structuring of this Catholic doctrine occurs with Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274 AD) and is made official as canonical doctrine at the Council of Trent (1545-1563 AD).

Canon III of this council says to the letter:

If anyone claims that Adam's sin injured him alone, and not his offspring; and that he lost for himself, and not also for us, the holiness and righteousness which he had received from God; or that he himself was stained by the guilt of his disobedience, he only transmitted death and bodily punishment to the whole human race, but not sin, which is the death of the soul; let him be excommunicated, for he contradicts the Apostle who claims: "for this reason sin entered the world, and death through sin; and thus death passed to all men through him in whom all have sinned".

Council of Trent, Session V, June 17, 1546 (translated by the author)

Canon IV completes the idea:

If anyone denies that newborn children are to be baptized, even though they are the children of baptized parents; or says that they are baptized so that their sins may be forgiven, but that they have no share in the original sin of Adam, that they need to be purified by the bath of regeneration to obtain eternal life; whence it follows that the form of Baptism is understood concerning them not true, but false in order to the remission of sins; let him be excommunicated: for these words of the Apostle: "through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death passed upon all men through him in whom all have sinned"; are to be understood in no other sense than that in which they have always been understood by the Catholic Church spread throughout the world. And so by this rule of faith, according to the tradition of the Apostles, even infants who have not yet been able to commit any personal sin, receive in all truth Baptism in remission of their sins; so that regeneration may purify in them that which they have contracted for generation: for he who is born again of water and the Holy Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Council of Trent, Session V, June 17, 1546 (translated by the author)

Notice how a verse we already discussed is misquoted (twice) when it says "death passed over to all men through him in whom all have sinned" instead of the correct quote "death passed over to all men, because all have sinned". Obviously, the purpose is to confuse the unprepared reader.

Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed on all men inasmuch as all sinned:

Romans 5:12

It is also evident the bonding and the purpose of establishing this doctrine, to make the baptism of infants a means of bonding newborns to the Church by relying on threats of ex-communication for the parents.

The truth is that the Bible does not say that we are sinners at birth, but rather by yielding to temptation and sinning. It is there that we become prisoners of death, not at birth.

God bless you.